THE MENTOR

"A Wise and Faithful Guide and Friend"

VOL. I No. 17

DUTCH MASTERPIECES

THE NIGHT WATCH, BY REMBRANDT, 1607-1669

THE LAUGHING CAVALIER, BY HALS, 1580-1666

THE CHRISTENING, BY STEEN, 1626-1679

THE YOUNG BULL, BY POTTER, 1625-1654

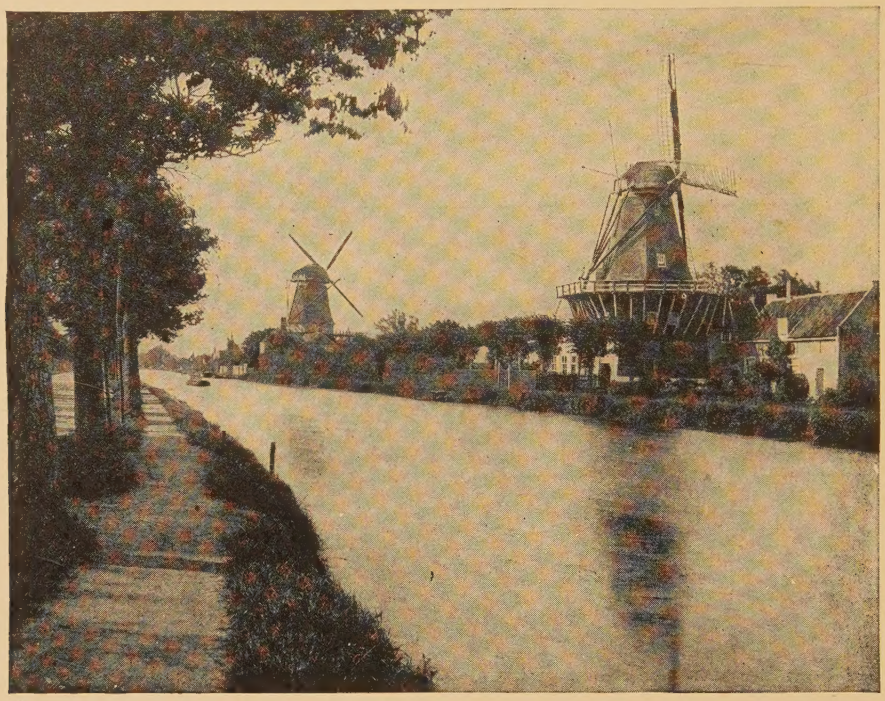
IN A COURTYARD, BY DE HOOCH, 1632-1681

THE AVENUE, BY HOBBEMA, 1638-1709

By JOHN C. VAN DYKE, Professor of the History of Art, Rutgers College; author of "Old Dutch and Flemish Masters," "History of Painting," etc.

IN looking at Dutch pictures one should banish all thought of Greek ideals and Italian types. Classic gods and prayerful Madonnas were not painted by the Dutchmen. They were too far removed, too fanciful, for a serious minded, matter-of-fact people to consider. The Dutch were always matter of fact. Adversity made them so. In the early days they were strugglers for existence, and had no time for nursing poetic ideals and pictorial fancies.

They fought the sea for a foothold on the earth, and to this day they are keeping back that sea with their dikes. They fought Spain for political freedom and won it; they fought Rome for religious freedom, and won it. With the establishment of their independence and the growth of their commerce came wealth, and with wealth came art; but it was not a tinseled art of pretty Venuses and Apollos lounging on Olympian



WINDMILLS AND CANAL NEAR DELFT

clouds. On the contrary, it told about the Dutch themselves: it was an art of realities, of actual scenes, of a living people. The reality was always represented, and it mattered not whether the picture was a group of semi-aristocratic burghers by De Keyser, (duh kī-zer) or peasants in a tavern by Ostade, (os′-tah-de) or cattle in the polder-lands by Cuyp, (koip) or merely a landscape by Van Goyen. (von ghoy-un.)

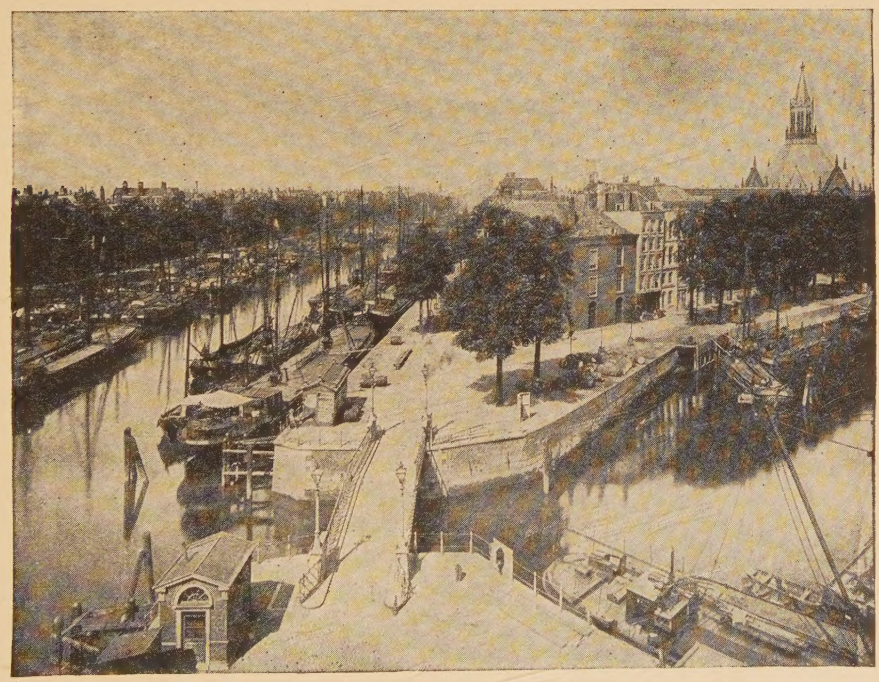
It was an attempt to paint the actual truth of the model before them. In that sense, all Dutch art was a likeness of Holland and its people, a portrait of the land and its life. Even when painters like Rembrandt, Bol (bohl), and Flinck did scriptural scenes such as Jacob wrestling with the Angel, the Jacob was a Simon-pure Dutchman and the angel was an Amsterdam angel of the painter's immediate household. Nothing could shake their keen sense of reality, of fact, of truth.

HOLLAND'S PLACE IN ART

Such an attitude of mind may seem rather material and lead one to think Dutch painting rather a coarse, commonplace affair; but such was not the case. The very truth of it, its keen characterization of the time, the

people, the place, made it powerful. And whatever earthliness may be found in the subject, there is never the slightest touch of earthliness in the manner of its doing. For the Dutch were the world's famous handlers of the brush. As technicians they have never been excelled. In the laying on of paint the great Italians, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, (lay-o-nar'-do dah vin'-che) were immature, crude, incomplete, compared with the little Dutchmen like Terburg and Brouwer. Their skill was not merely wonderful for Holland in the seventeenth century, but it is wonderful for today, and for all time.

The admiration for the old masters of Holland is not a mere fad. It is very well founded. Age has nothing to do with the admiration. The pictures are valuable to the present generation because of their style, their spirit, their truth to a point of view, and most of all for their superb workmanship. In four hundred years not a single painter has arisen to handle a brush with the certainty and ease of Hals, or to model a face with the power of Rembrandt, or to lay on beautiful colors with the color sense of Van der Meer of Delft. The manner in which Rembrandt could draw an eye, or round a cheek, or paint a luminous shadow under a hat brim, is a lost art. The color, light, and atmospheric setting of De Hooch at his



TYPICAL DUTCH STREETS

REMBRANDT

best are as inimitable as the altogether perfect drawing of Terburg or the perfect handling of Brouwer.

REMBRANDT GREATEST PAINTER OF NORTHERN EUROPE

Sentiment—yes, the painters of Holland had plenty of sentiment; but it went out not so much in their subjects as in their decorative effects. They grew emotional over warm sunlight, sympathetic over color harmonies, mysterious over shadow masses, sentimental about aërial perspective. They were devoted to beauty of craftsmanship and in love with art for the pure art of it. One painter among them seemed to sympathize more profoundly with mankind than most of his contemporaries. He strove to show his sympathy in the faces, the bowed forms, the praying hands, of his characters. He was also a great craftsman and delighted in fine workmanship; but he had the sorrow of the world and a deep feeling for humanity in his heart.

Was it this feeling for humanity, combined with his splendid technical skill that made Rembrandt the greatest painter north of the Alps? Very likely. And yet it is not to his sorrow-laden portraits, or his pathetic "Supper at Emmaus," or his impressive "Manoah's Prayer" that the crowd turns seeking his masterpiece. It goes to the "Night Watch,"—a splendid decorative canvas, but possessed of little sentiment or feeling save for beauty of color and shadow masses.

MASTER OF LIGHT AND SHADOWS

The "Night Watch" is a famous picture, and deservedly so. It shows Rembrandt's power, and it also shows his weakness. He has been called "the Master of Light," and yet this picture rather shows him to be the slave of light. He had a searchlight method of illuminating a face by throwing the full glare on the forehead, nose, and collar, and then surrounding this massed illumination by deep shadows as a foil and for contrast. This was a powerful method for a single head, as Rembrandt proved again and again in his many bust portraits; but when he came to do a series of portraits on one canvas, as in the "Night Watch," his method rather broke down. Instead of one illumination coming from the sky and

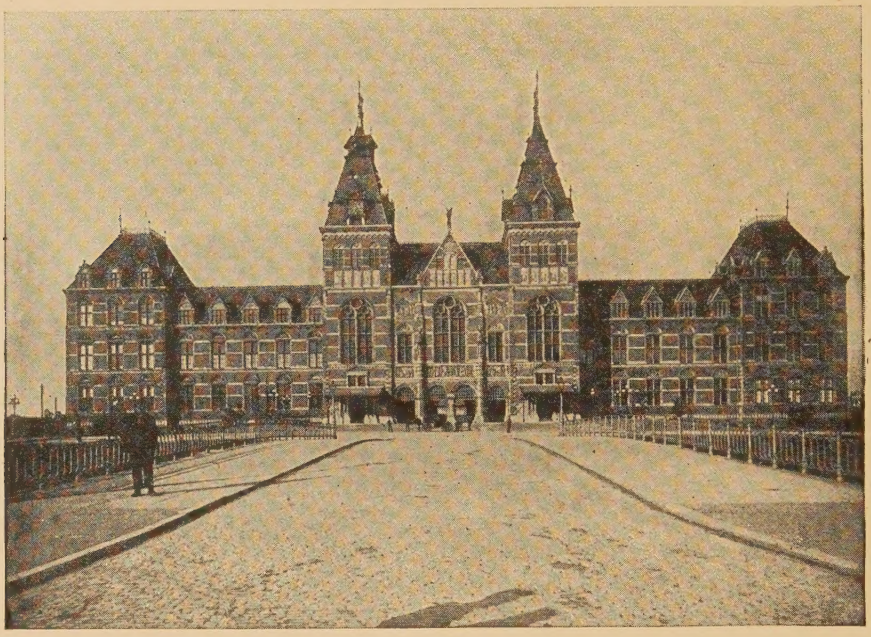
lighting the whole group of the militia company we have sixteen or twenty flashes from the searchlight lighting up sixteen or twenty distinct heads. These heads show about all the light there is in the picture. Around them and back of them is shadow, gloom, mystery, darkness.

THE "NIGHT WATCH" A DAY SCENE

Now look at the picture and you will understand why it was thought to be a night scene and mistakenly called the "Night Watch." There is no light in it except for the flashes of the searchlight. As a matter of fact, it is intended to be a daylight scene, and is the sortie from its armory of a civic guard or militia company called the Frans Banning Cocq Company; but it looks like a night scene owing to the limitations of Rembrandt's method. Count that as a defect of method if you will, and yet note that there is a decided quality that goes along with the defect. The spaces between the lighted heads and figures are shadowy and gloomy. At the back there is a transparent veil of shadow and atmosphere out of which figures come forward, peering into the light.

Tall columns, suggestions of arches, wreathed escutcheons, glimmering halberds, drooping flags, are half seen here and there. What a mystery there is behind all that veil of faintly illumined shadow! What a bustle and movement and pellmell of unexpectedness in all those figures coming forward out of the depths, growing brighter as they advance into the light! Lieutenant Ruytenberg, in the front, is the highest in light of them all, being dressed in a buff suit; and next to him, as a foil, is Captain Cocq in a black suit. How these two figures move! How firmly their feet strike the ground! They are the very poetry of motion. To the left of the captain is a little girl in a sea-green dress with a white bird hanging at her girdle. Why is she there? No one knows. Rembrandt put her there doubtless as a mass of light to relieve the surrounding darks. The contrasts are striking even in reproductions of the picture; but in the original painting the whole scene is a splendid mass of light and dark saturated with atmosphere, and inter-

STATUE OF REMBRANDT



THE FAMOUS RYKS MUSEUM AT AMSTERDAM

woven with color. Reds, yellows, and blues, with buffs, saffrons, pearl grays, sapphires, opalescent tints run through it. It is a wonder of color as of shadow and air.

It was painted in 1642, was shortly afterward cut down at the sides and top, has been much cleaned and repainted, and recently a wandering fool in the gallery slashed it with a knife; but in spite of time and much damage it is still a wonderful picture. Like a battered fragment of Greek sculpture, it seems as though nothing could wholly destroy its feeling of beauty.

FRANS HALS PAINTER OF "SPEAKING LIKENESSES"

Frans Hals did civic guard pictures too; but none of them had the movement and bustle, or was quite such a picture as the "Night Watch." They were groups of individual portraits, showing splendid physical types, arranged formally, and with a fine display of color; but with none of the shadowed mystery of Rembrandt. Hals had a facile hand, and was one of the world's foremost painters; but he lacked the penetrating insight and the great humanity of Rembrandt. All his types have physical presence. They show bulk, weight, poise, animal spirits; but they are not over-soulful or keenly intellectual. The

"Laughing Cavalier" is a refined illustration of his point of view. The Cavalier is quite a marvel as a mass of good health and good nature. He smiles serenely, as though his digestion were perfect and dull, carking care had not pierced his mind to any appreciable extent. Technically the picture is thoroughly well constructed and quite faultlessly painted. No one could do the outside of a man better than Hals.

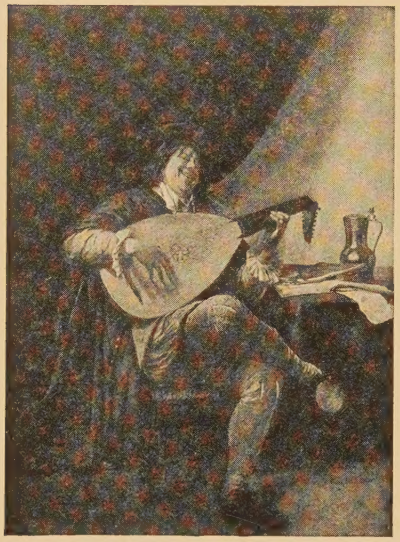
In the Municipal Gallery at Haarlem one can see him in half a dozen large civic-guard pictures, done at different times, and covering fifty years of his career as a painter. Here he is shown in all his phases, starting in his early pictures with much color, and ending in his late examples with somber grays and blacks.

FRANS HALS

One hardly knows which to admire the more, his early or his late work. In the last pictures of the series, when an old man, it is apparent that his hand has lost its cunning, and his eye no longer cares for brilliant hues; but he has a wonderful regard for tone and atmospheric envelop; and his grays and blacks are superb in sobriety, dignity, and calm restraint. It is said that the bitterness of his life (he died in the almshouse), had to do with this somber coloring of his later canvases; but it is not likely. It was a broadened point of view, the refinement of simplicity, that often comes to painters late in life. It shows in his single portraits, as well as in his guild pictures, and was the natural culmination of the man's artistic career. It was a famous, if somewhat checkered career, and he a famous if somewhat material painter. In Holland he was second only to Rembrandt.

JAN STEEN THE TAVERN PAINTER OF HOLLAND

In a smaller way Jan Steen (yan stane) was quite as fine a painter as Hals; in fact, quite a master painter after his kind, though often doing hasty and careless work. When traveling in the Low Countries, Sir Joshua Reynolds spoke complacently of Steen's work, and ventured to say (in his Discourses) that "the painting of Steen might even become the design of Raphael." The remark nowadays calls forth something of a smile. Raphael was, indeed, a great artist; but as a painter pure and simple he is not to be compared with Steen. To be sure, one



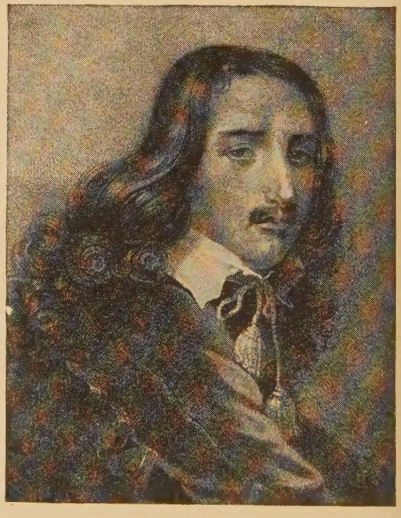
JAN STEEN, BY HIMSELF

painted saints and angels where the other painted drunken boors fighting in a tavern or back yard; but the painter of the boors painted them in quite an angelic way. Occasionally he did a religious subject; but, strange enough, these were always his poorer pictures. He seemed to give out his greatest skill when working over disreputable themes. The "Bad Company" picture in the Louvre is one of his very best canvases, and is quite flawless in tone, color, textures, and handling.

POTTER, THE ANIMAL PORTRAITIST

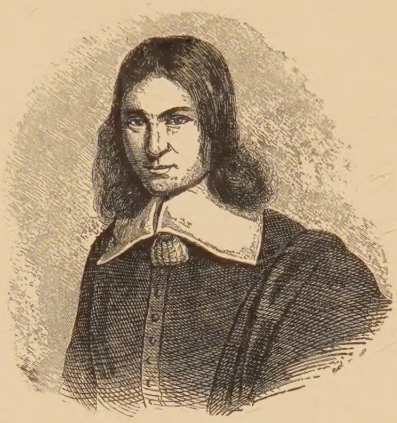
To speak about Paul Potter in the same breath with an accomplished craftsman like Steen seems artistic blasphemy. Potter had an exaggerated reputation as a painter of cattle, though possessed of considerable skill as a draftsman. His paintings may be considered as portraits of cattle which accentuate the physical appearance, rather than the beauty or the form of the subject. He never was a painter like Steen, never had a color sense, never knew how to produce a decorative surface. His view of nature is hard, literal, harshly realistic, devoid of charm. He could get little beauty out of sunlight or shadow, out of atmosphere or sky, out of cattle or humanity. He drew with a rasping wire-edged brush and by exaggerated modeling produced a "stand-out" effect in his cattle which has made people stare. It is, however, not the object of painting to make objects stand *out*, but to make them stand *in*.

Potter's reputation was great during his lifetime, and was probably increased by his early death. So large was the demand for his pictures that the supply was soon exhausted, and the obliging art dealers of



PAUL POTTER

Amsterdam forged his name on pictures by Isaack van Ostade and Cuyp and sold them as Potters. These pictures are still doing service as Potters in some of the art galleries of Europe.



PIETER DE HOOCH

DE HOOCH PAINTER OF SUNNY HOLLAND

Pieter de Hooch was a painter of Dutch courtyards and interiors, sometimes of a very humble nature, and sometimes showing the aristocratic side of Dutch life in palatial halls with finely robed characters. He seemed content with his picture if it contained handsome color, atmosphere, shadow, and above all sunlight. His sunlit passageways and courtyards with bricks, his floors and windows and kitchen utensils, his housewife with her child, are simple and humble enough in theme; but he has made them quite glorious, quite splendid, as art. The people of his day, however, did not care for them. He achieved no fame until long after his death, and then in England rather than in his native land. Today he is one of the Dutch immortals, and his pictures that occasionally find their way into an auction room sell for enormous prices.

HOBBEMA A MODEL FOR LANDSCAPISTS

Hobbema (hob'-be-mah) was another genius who failed to impress anyone in his lifetime. The painting of landscape in the seventeenth century was not a profitable business; and though Hobbema painted out-of-doors quite as beautifully as De Hooch painted indoors, they both did some starving, and died in poverty and neglect. The irony of fate comes in when it is realized that the pictures of Ruysdael and Hobbema were the models for the Fontainebleau-Barbison (fon-tain-blow bar-bi-son) painters—Rousseau (roo-so), Diaz (dee'-ath), Dupré (doo-pray)—whose works have sold of recent years for such huge sums.

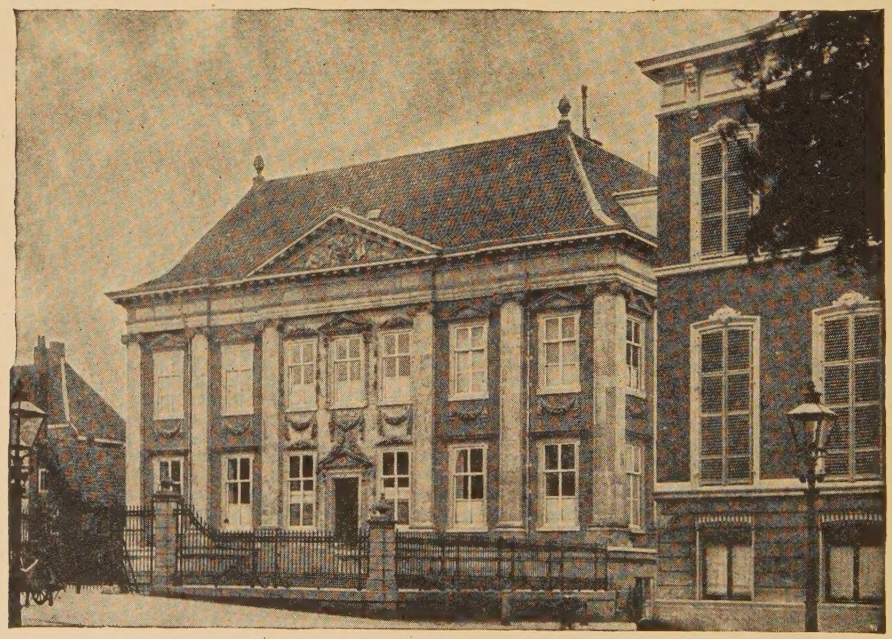
Hobbema was one of the best of the Dutch landscapists, and dealt with more sunlight and blue sky than his master, Ruysdael (rois-dahl); although his celebrated "Avenue of Middelharnis" in the National Gallery, London, is rather slate-gray in color. For all that, it shows Holland in a characteristic garb and is a truthful portrait of the country. To this day there are roads in Holland with trees dwindling away in linear perspective and garden patches on each side, just as in this Hobbema picture.

All of which brings us back to our first conclusion that Dutch art, whether of people or cattle, of interiors or exteriors, is a true transcript of the original, a portrait of the land and its life, a picture of Holland and the Dutch. That may be its limitation, but it is also its success.

It was the Dutchmen who set the pace for all the moderns in what is called realism. All the modern *genre** painters and students of still life who paint things that "stand out" are but a growth from the Dutch. The tradition has been handed down unimpaired, losing none of its ancient positiveness, but rather gaining some latterday exactness in the process of transmission.

The Dutch are not to be judged by classic rules or standards. They made their own rules, and after four hundred years the modern Dutch artists are using them in their own work. Instead of beauty of form, the Dutch have always striven for fitness and character. They have succeeded as no other painters in embodying the life and people of their own country in their pictures. They were proud of their race and their culture, and they depicted them with frankness and candor. It is not given to every nation to be true to itself in art.

* "We call those 'genre' canvases, whereon are painted idyls of the fireside, the roadside, and the farm, pictures of 'real life.'" *E. C. Stedman, Poets of America, page* 98



MUSEUM AT THE HAGUE

The Profits of Attention

THE celebrated English journalist, George Augustus Sala, had only one good eye—but that eye was a searchlight for an alert mind. A brief glance at the contents of a shop window enabled Sala to describe each article therein. For this photographic faculty of observation he was called a genius. It was attention that made the genius. The power of applying attention steadily to a subject is a mark of a superior mind. It is for lack of attention rather than of ability that men often fail of success. "If I have made any improvement in the sciences," said Sir Isaac Newton, "it is owing more to patient attention than to anything beside."

THE profits of attention are Knowledge, Mastery and Success. All achievement depends on attention. It opens new worlds, it discovers, invents and constructs. It led Newton to the discovery of gravitation, Harvey to trace the circulation of the blood, and Sir Humphry Davy to the observations that laid the foundation of modern chemistry. "It is attention," said a philosopher, "more than any difference in native powers, that makes the wide difference between minds and men."

FOR all that you gain you must pay. For the profits of knowledge and achievement you must pay attention. Pay attention to all things worthy—and especially to human nature. There is nothing that you can offer to your fellow man that is finer or more flattering than complete attention when he speaks. Your profit is assured, for if his utterances do not repay you his friendship will.

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HILLE BOBBE, BY FRANS HALS

"THE NIGHT WATCH," Rembrandt's celebrated painting, is one of six intaglio-gravure reproductions illustrating "Dutch Masterpieces."

REMBRANDT

Monograph Number One in The Mentor Reading Course

WHEN Rembrandt painted the most famous of all his works, the picture commonly known as "The Night Watch," which hangs in the Royal Museum at Amsterdam, it caused him a vast amount of trouble. There are upwards of a score of portraits in the big canvas, and each man contributed the same amount to pay for it. Naturally each wanted to be as prominent as his fellows, and those who are shown in the background made a tremendous row because the artist dared to group his figures with the thought of art composition, rather than of their importance.

Really it is not a night scene at all. Sir Joshua Reynolds is responsible for this misstatement, being deceived by Rembrandt's originality in handling light and shade. It shows the gathering of the civic guard of Amsterdam at the sound of the drum calling them to practice.

Rembrandt was one of the few masters of painting who had an opportunity to be extravagant. He spent lavishly, and gave away money with equal indifference. He paid outrageous prices for pictures, when he should have paid his debts. Like most great geniuses of art, he died poor and neglected.

His real name was Rembrandt Harmanzoon van Rijn, and he was born at Leyden in 1607, the son of a well-to-do miller.

He was his own teacher. In his early days in Leyden Rembrandt painted and etched the people about him, seeking character and the picturesque, whether he found it in distinguished folk or in beggars and cripples. He constantly used his mother as a model. He painted between fifty and sixty portraits of himself: not from vanity, but to master every form of expression, to learn how to represent the human face from within.

His methods were original during his whole career. Sometimes he would take the handle of the brush and drag it over the fresh paint to give the touch he wanted to the hair or the beard. Sometimes he would scoop up thick layers of paint with the palette knife and stick them on the canvas.

Rembrandt developed slowly; but at twenty-five he painted the wonderful "Lesson in Anatomy," in which is shown the anatomist Tulp and his seven associates, life size.

He was then recognized as the foremost portrait painter of Amsterdam.

When he was twenty-eight Rembrandt married a rich and beautiful fair-haired Friesian girl named Saskia. For eight years his wife was the center of Rembrandt's life and art, and her face appears on many of his canvases. These were happy years for Rembrandt. He entertained lavishly; but in spite of many distractions he worked with great energy. No fewer than 700 of his paintings and etchings have been catalogued.

After the death of his wife evil days came. When he was forty-nine years old everything that Rembrandt owned was sold to meet his debts. He was turned out of his house, without friends, with little more than the clothes on his back. He whom the world has called the "King of Shadows" entered into the gloom of poverty. But still he worked until he died at the age of sixty-two, alone and neglected.

"The Gilder," painted in 1640, was sold in Paris in 1802 for $1,000. In 1888 it was sold to M. M. Havemeyer of New York for $80,000. P. A. B. Widener paid $500,000 for "The Mill," because he believed it to be a Rembrandt, although some authorities doubt its authenticity. Recently H. C. Frick of New York paid $250,000 for Rembrandt's "The Merchant."

PREPARED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION
ILLUSTRATION FOR THE MENTOR, No. 17

THE LAUGHING CAVALIER, BY FRANS HALS

"THE LAUGHING CAVALIER," Frans Hals' world known picture, is one of the six intaglio-gravure reproductions illustrating "Dutch Masterpieces."

FRANS HALS

Monograph Number Two in The Mentor Reading Course

"THE LAUGHING CAVALIER" is the most famous and best liked of the paintings of Frans Hals. And the Cavalier himself is most familiar too, in glance, in manner, in bearing. No one can resist the bold challenge of those mischievous eyes, the full, life-loving lips. He swells with wonderful conceit in himself and a cheery disdain of the world in general. It is altogether a marvelous study of expression. In 1865 Sir Richard Wallace gave $10,000 for the portrait. The Haarlem collector, who had owned it, paid $400 for it. Its value now would probably be in the hundred thousands.

For truth of character Frans Hals was the greatest painter that ever lived; but it took the world an interminably long time to discover it. A hundred and twenty years after his death one of his great portraits brought only $1.25 at a sale. He was an aristocrat by birth and disreputable by choice. Members of his family were burgomasters, treasurers, and aldermen of Haarlem for nearly three hundred years. Frans and his brother Dirk were frequenters of the lowest taverns, and this is about all we know of him from the time he was born in 1580 until he was married at the age of thirty-one.

Up to the time he was thirty-three there is nothing to show that Frans Hals produced anything worthy of attention; but he evidently worked to some purpose. His marvelous capacity for catching an expression on the instant brought him many patrons.

It was just about that time that the great demand for huge group portraits had set in, and Hals profited by it. He agreed to give those who contributed the largest sum toward the group the important places in the composition, which rivalry increased many times the prices he would otherwise have received, and also freed him from subsequent complaint. They were jovial folk, those men of Frans Hals' time, and he loved to paint them as they were.

He had a season of real prosperity, and might have become rich; but after a time the commissions interfered with his drinking, and that was something that Frans could not endure. He loved the tavern better than the studio; but his mastery over the brush enabled him to produce a vast amount of work in a very short time. He liked better, however, to paint the jolly topers and the fisherwives than the rich burghers. The time came when he "sweated" his many pupils, making them draw and paint subjects for which he paid them little or nothing, which he sold at fair prices to meet his weekly tavern bills.

From the time he was thirty-three until he was fifty he lived in Haarlem. His love of the tavern increased. He grew poorer and poorer; but continued to paint. His love of bright colors seemed to disappear entirely; until finally he was painting in gray shadows with backgrounds in almost jet black. Some say it was because he could not afford to buy colors.

When he was seventy years old a baker, who not only gave him bread but lent him money as well, appealed to the courts to compel Hals to pay his debts. The painter's house was seized and the contents sold to the highest bidder. One of the greatest painters of the world was obliged to appeal to the municipal council in order to live. It gave him fuel and food and an annuity of $80, which he received until he died.

PREPARED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION
ILLUSTRATION FOR THE MENTOR, No. 17

"THE YOUNG BULL," a famous animal painting by Paul Potter, is one of the six intaglio-gravure reproductions illustrating "Dutch Masterpieces."

PAUL POTTER

Monograph Number Three in The Mentor Reading Course

BEFORE he died at twenty-nine, worn out by excessive work, Paul Potter, the "Raphael of Animal Painters," was already famous, and, what is even more extraordinary, he was prosperous. Few of the great Dutch masters enjoyed either distinction. Also Potter was unique in that he developed very early. At fifteen his paintings were ranked with those of artists of distinction.

His first lessons were received from his father, a landscape and figure painter of mediocre talents. When Paul was six years old his father moved from Enkhuizen, where the boy was born in 1625, to Amsterdam, and afterward to The Hague. Paul was placed under a good master; but work in the studio had small attraction for him. He was chiefly his own teacher, and the greater part of his time was devoted to making studies from nature. Almost from the first he was interested in animals; but he became a master of landscape because of its necessity as a background.

One of his neighbors in The Hague was Claes Balchenmeyndem, who called himself an architect, and was convinced that he really was a very important person. Potter fell in love with his daughter Adriana, and formally asked the prideful father for her hand.

"What!" exclaimed Balchenmeyndem, throwing up his hands in horror, "my daughter marry a painter? And what a painter? A painter of animals! If you were only a painter of men, or portraits—but a painter of animals!"

But it was the habit of the frail Potter to get exactly what he wanted. The opposition of the parent made this marriage a little more difficult; but he married Adriana without much delay.

Potter had business sense as well as his artistic endowments. When Maurice, Prince of Orange, magnanimously made himself the patron of the young artist, Potter gladly accepted the royal favor at exactly its face value and made the most of it. For the Prince of Orange he painted the lifesize "Young Bull," now one of the most celebrated works in The Hague Gallery.

Some idea of the feverish energy of Potter may be gained from the fact that in ten years he executed a hundred existing paintings and twenty etchings, to say nothing of many drawings and studies. To these must be added thirty or forty more works which appear in various sale catalogues, but have been lost. And to some of these paintings he devoted five months.

His horses and cattle are so individual that it is said of Potter that he painted portraits of them. He took the greatest pains to acquaint himself with the characters of the animals he painted. "He seemed to enter the heart of the kine," so faithful is his understanding of their nature.

The learned German art critic, Dr. Waager, says of Potter, "Of the masters who have striven preëminently after truth, he is beyond all question one of the greatest that ever lived."

PREPARED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION
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IN A COURTYARD. By De Hooch

N A COURTYARD," Pieter de Hooch's great painting, is one of the six intaglio-gravure reproductions illustrating "Dutch Masterpieces."

PIETER DE HOOCH

Monograph Number Four in The Mentor Reading Course

IT is very certain that Pieter de Hooch lived. In fact, there were a great many of him; for nearly every town in Holland has a large assortment. One of these was a wonderful Pieter de Hooch, as is proved by the two hundred and fifty paintings now in existence. In 1876 the Berlin Museum paid $26,000 for one of his paintings. Probably if anyone had offered a quarter of that sum for all of Pieter de Hooch's work and for Pieter himself during his lifetime, the would-be purchaser would have been locked up as a dangerous lunatic.

Apparently no one had the slightest interest in Pieter the painter while he lived, nor for more than a century after he died.

But Pieter de Hooch had no more interest in people than they had in him, if one is to judge by his pictures. As Professor J. C. Van Dyke says in his book, "Old Dutch and Flemish Masters":

"From his pictures one might say that Pieter de Hooch had only a slight interest in the intellectual, moral, or spiritual life of humanity. He used men and women much as he used chairs, tables, floors, and windows. People were to him objects showing line, mass, and color. He never troubled himself to any extent with their lives or adventures, their thoughts or their emotions."

When Pieter de Hooch was living Cromwell waged war on Holland, and the country was seething with internal disturbances. Only those who could make a noise in the world attracted any attention, and it is not of record that Pieter made any more noise than a mouse. Apparently all he wanted was the privilege of painting the most marvelous interiors, with amazing effects of light and shade.

As in the case of Hobbema, De Hooch's greatness was first recognized in England, where the authorities made such a fuss about his work that Holland swiftly came to the conclusion that it had neglected one of its great men. Then began the difficult business of finding out something about him.

After great searching it was finally determined that he was born in Rotterdam about 1632. What he did and where he lived during the first twenty-three years of his life are unknown. He is described as a painter and servant to a certain merchant, who was also something of a patron of the arts. De Hooch lived in Delft for two years, from 1655 to 1657, as the record of his marriage there and his membership in the painters' guild prove. From that time until he turned up in Amsterdam eleven years later there is no trace of him. He painted pictures in 1677; but after that all record of him is lost, except that he died in Haarlem about 1681.

De Hooch was one of the kindliest and most charming painters of homely subjects that Holland has produced. All his paintings that have survived are small. The only large canvas that he ever painted was destroyed in the fire of Rotterdam in 1864. Sometimes he chose a drawing room with dancing cavaliers and ladies as his subjects; but he much preferred the homelier scenes, especially interiors illuminated by different intensities of light, and his special joy seems to have been in painting furniture.

PREPARED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION
ILLUSTRATION FOR THE MENTOR, No. 17

"THE CHRISTENING," Jan Steen's masterpiece, is one of the six intaglio-gravure reproductions illustrating "Dutch Masterpieces."

JAN STEEN

Monograph Number Five in The Mentor Reading Course

IT was Jan Steen's mission to paint human life in a spirit of toleration, emphasized by keen satire. "He keeps on friendly terms with the devil even while painting the cloven hoof." His father was a brewer in Leyden, where Jan was born in 1626.

When he was eighteen he went to Haarlem, where he studied under Jan van Goyen and married his daughter.

When he was forty-one he went into the brewery business at Delft; but failed, and his pictures were seized and sold because of a debt of four dollars he owed to an apothecary. He returned to Leyden and opened a tavern. He died at Leyden at the age of fifty-three.

The earliest biographers of Jan Steen represent him as a sort of Falstaff among artists, leading a rollicking, drunken life. More recently effort has been made to show that he led a sober, industrious life; that he was a sort of Hogarth, who painted to inculcate moral lessons. But his pictures seem to bear out the former judgment. Jan's impish humor is shown in many ways—in his life and art. The following story is characteristic:

"The stern old pastor of Leyden sat near him by the hearth, and delivered a lengthy discourse concerning his jovial life unchristian conduct, his love of drinking, his disorderly domestic affairs, his obdurate gaiety; and Jan listened quietly for two hours, and betrayed not the slightest impatience at the lengthy sermon. Only once he broke in with the words, 'Yes, Dominie, that light is far better; yes, Dominie, I beg of you to draw your stool a little nearer to the fire, so that the flame may cast its red gleam over your whole face and leave the rest of the figure in shade.'

"The Dominie stood up wrathful and departed. But Jan seized his palette and painted the stern old man just as in that sermon on vice he had unconsciously furnished a model. The picture is excellent."

In his art Jan satirized even his very excellent wife.

"As I think, his wife reproached him far too often about drinking too much; for in the picture which represents the bean-feast, where Jan and his family are sitting at table, we see his wife with a large jug of wine in her hand, and eyes beaming like a Bacchante's. I am convinced, however, that the good lady never indulged in too much wine: only the rogue wanted us to believe that it was his wife, and not he, who was too fond of drinking. That is why he laughs so joyously out of the picture."

There isn't any question about Jan Steen's greatness as a painter nor his versatility. He painted chemists in their laboratories, doctors at the bedside of their patients, card parties, marriage feasts, even religious subjects. He had a special gift for painting children. While his work is full of humor, it is all characterized by a remarkable intellectual quality. For a joyous roisterer he appears to have been very industrious; for nearly nine hundred of his works have been listed in catalogues.

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ILLUSTRATION FOR THE MENTOR, No. 17

"THE AVENUE," a renowned landscape by Hobbema, is one of the six intaglio-gravure reproductions illustrating "Dutch Masterpieces."

MEYNDERT HOBBEMA

Monograph Number Six in The Mentor Reading Course

WHILE Meyndert Hobbema lived no one had any respect whatever for his pictures, not even the wonderful "Avenue at Middelharnis," now in the National Museum in London; but he was admitted to be a competent wine gager. If, after his death, someone who saw the genius in his works had gone to Amsterdam seeking knowledge of him as a painter, the good Dutch folk would probably have said, "Meyndert Hobbema? Oh, yes, he tried to paint pictures. Foolish things indeed,—a pond full of ducks and geese, a moss-covered mill, little houses with red roofs, and sunsets,—things anybody can see for himself, mere daubs! Jakob Ruysdael tried to make a painter of him; but—"

Then perhaps the bored tone would give way to one of lively interest, to the telling of something important.

"He escaped dying of starvation in the strangest way. He had a business head after all, had Meyndert Hobbema.

"He married old Eltinge, but maybe it was she who had the business head, for she was four or five years older than Meyndert and she had worked as a servant for the burgomaster."

Eltinge had a girl friend who worked as servant to the burgomaster too, and she had great influence with him. It was arranged with this servant that, if she had Meyndert appointed wine gager he was to pay her out of his salary an annual pension of $100, unless she married and secured a similar position for her own husband. The contract was drawn up all in proper form and signed before a notary, and the servant did persuade the burgomaster to give Meyndert the position.

There was not much romance in Meyndert Hobbema's life. He was born in Amsterdam in 1638 and was buried there in a pauper's grave in 1709. So it is seen his work received small appreciation while he lived; though now he and Ruysdael are considered the greatest landscape painters of the Dutch school.

England discovered his greatness more than a century after his death, and nine-tenths of his works are found in that country, because the English collectors gathered the landscapes before Holland awakened to their value.

But maybe Hobbema had a much better time than these few facts of his life suggest. Maybe he knew something of the contentment and peace of his pictures, which so admirably typify the Dutch character. He saw the magical beauty in familiar prosaic scenes of the Dutch countryside, and these he could bring out in his paintings; for no artist has surpassed him in truth of atmospheric effect, in tone, in brilliance of color. Figures interested him not at all. It is said that when he found it necessary to put them in a picture he had other artists paint them.

Although he lived seventy-one years, there are in existence only about one hundred paintings credited to him. There is no mention of Hobbema in any sale catalogue until twenty-six years after his death, when two of his landscapes were sold for $44. But the recognition of his genius, so slow in coming, was none the less sure. In 1880 one of his landscapes sold for $44,000.

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